
NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

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**Honda Brings Ex-POWs Washington to Share their Story
with Members of Congress, Staff on Capitol Hill**

Washington, DC - As Congress prepares to adjourn for Memorial Day, House Members and their staff who attended a meeting hosted by U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose) today learned firsthand about the true meaning of service and sacrifice from some of America's greatest heroes—the survivors of the infamous Bataan Death March. These veterans, who were part of the Allied forces surrendered to the Japanese in April of 1942, spent the duration of war as slave laborers for Japanese corporations including Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Kawasaki. They have also spent the past 57 years fighting for the truth to be told about the slave labor they performed and the abuse they endured under unspeakable conditions during their captivity. Sadly, the U.S. government, led by the Departments of State and Justice, continues to oppose the POWs in their pursuit of justice by blocking their access to the courts.

“Memorial Day means more than parades and barbeques—it means honoring those who risked their lives and made the sacrifices necessary to safeguard the freedoms that all Americans enjoy,” said Honda. **“For all our veterans, and especially for our POWs, everyday should be Memorial Day— that is why I brought these heroes to the Congress to share their story and move closer to achieving the justice they deserve.”**

The briefing was held to educate Members of Congress and their staff about the POWs fight for justice in the courts and in Congress. Reps. Karen Thurman (D-FL) and Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) also participated.

Honda's bill, *“The Justice for United States Prisoners of War Act”* (HR 1198) would allow American military POWs to sue Japanese companies in U.S. state or federal court for losses and injuries sustained during the time they were imprisoned and forced into slave labor. The bill interprets section 14(b) of the Treaty of Peace with Japan as not constituting a waiver by the United States to allow lawsuits by its POWs against Japan and its corporations. The bill would also instruct the courts to apply the statute of limitations of the State where any suit is brought to preserve claims that are currently being brought by American POWs against Japanese corporations in state and federal courts. The bill also provides that if Japan enters into peace settlement terms with another country more beneficial to that country than to the United States, those additional benefits will also be extended to the United States.

“Fulfilling our commitment to America's veterans and POWs is not only a matter of honor, it is a matter of national security,” said Honda. **“I strongly believe that the 21st century will be a new American Century, but to make this a reality, we must honor the past and safeguard the future by being there for those who have been there for all of us.”**

